

Statement on Initiatives To Empower Young People

January 11, 2000

I am pleased to announce today that my budget for Fiscal Year 2001 will include over \$850 million for the Corporation for National Service. The investments in my budget will keep us on track to my goal of 100,000 AmeriCorps members serving annually. They will also fund several innovative initiatives to empower young people. Through a new AmeriCorps Reserves program, modeled on the military reserves, we will be able to engage former AmeriCorps members in service during times of crisis. Through a new Community Coaches program, we will place dedicated adults in 1,000 schools who can guide students in effective service and connect the school to the wider community. And through the Youth Empowerment grants I am proposing, we will be able to reward social entrepreneurship among young people who are finding their own solutions to problems like youth violence and civic alienation.

Everyone who serves is a catalyst for change. Since the passage of the National and Community Service Trust Act, more than 150,000 young people have served in AmeriCorps. They represent our very best ideals—they have helped to immunize more than a million people; taught, tutored, or mentored 4.4 million children; helped build some 11,000 homes; and truly sparked a new spirit of public engagement across the land. The initiatives I am announcing today will help more Americans share in the power and promise of community service. I look forward to working with Congress to ensure their enactment.

Statement Announcing Assistance to Colombia's Counterdrug Efforts

January 11, 2000

Today I am announcing an urgently needed, 2-year funding package to assist Colombia in vital counterdrug efforts aimed at keeping illegal drugs off our shores. It will also help Colombia promote peace and prosperity and deepen its democracy. Building on our current efforts, over this year and

next, our resulting support would total over \$1.6 billion.

President Pastrana's inauguration in August 1998 brought to Colombia a new spirit of hope—for deeper democracy, for broader prosperity, for an end to that country's long civil conflict. But increased drug production and trafficking, coupled with a serious economic recession and sustained violence, have put that progress in peril.

President Pastrana has responded with a bold agenda—Plan Colombia. It provides a solid, multifaceted strategy that the United States should support with substantial assistance. We have a compelling national interest in reducing the flow of cocaine and heroin to our shores and in promoting peace, democracy, and economic growth in Colombia and the region. Given the magnitude of the drug trafficking problem and their current economic difficulties, neither the Government of Colombia nor its neighbors can carry the full burden alone.

In fiscal year 2000, much of our support will be focused on a one-time infusion of funds to help boost Colombia's interdiction and eradication capabilities, particularly in the south.

The package will also include assistance for economic development, protection of human rights, and judicial reform.

Our bilateral aid to Colombia will be supplemented by multilateral agencies. The World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank are considering hundreds of millions of dollars in loans for Colombia next year. The IMF has already pledged a \$2.7 billion extended fund facility to help jumpstart the economy. And we will also continue to encourage our allies to assist Colombia.

The obstacles to a better future for Colombia are substantial. We expect it will require years before the full benefits of Plan Colombia are felt. But I believe that with our support and that of other donors, Plan Colombia can soon accelerate Colombia's nascent economic recovery. Over the longer haul, we can expect to see more effective drug eradication and increased interdiction of illicit drug shipments.

Strengthening stability and democracy in Colombia, and fighting the drug trade there,